

SECRET

15 May 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: MACV 29 April 1968 Guerrilla OB

1. The 29 April Guerrilla OB was received at DIA on 13 May and forwarded to CIA on 14 May. This new estimate shows an nation wide increase of 14,323 guerrillas over the previously held MACV estimate. This new estimate is probably based on incomplete reports for the first quarter of 1968. This is assumed to be the case since there is no change in the current estimate for IV Corps and the previous one.

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2. Although this estimate is a vast improvement over previous MACV estimative attempts, the current exercise still contains numerous inconsistencies; the least of which is not the methods used in evaluating documentary evidence.

3. In I Corps the estimate was increased from 12,562 to 25,045. This is the most acceptable of the four Corps, with only one major and one minor exceptions. Of minor impact is the apparent exclusion of about 1,000 Secret Guerrilla from the RVN Quang Nam Province estimate. On the other hand the estimate of 611 for Thua Thien appears to be devoid of all reason. In the first place, documentary evidence supports a figure well over twice this number. A document, with the data of info of September 1967, lists 1,747. In the second place, possible MACV attrition does not seem to warrant such a drop. The estimate for Thua Thien decreased from 2,600 since the first of the year while those for all other provinces in I Corps have increased. Finally the current estimate does not take into account the VC gains as a result of Tet -- the number of GVN controlled hamlets has been substantially reduced.

4. In keeping with ^{MACV} ~~military~~ tradition the estimate for II Corps shows a decline from the previous estimate to 15,806. Inconsistencies within this Corps are numerous. The methods used to evaluate documentary evidence vary greatly. The estimates for Binh Dinh and Phu Yen Provinces reflect available documentary evidence. A document dated February 1968 lists 5,404 guerrillas in Binh Dinh. The MACV estimate is 5,654. The estimate for Phu Yen is within 164 of the latest documentary indication. The estimate for Pleiku, on the other hand, totally disregards available documentation. Although the estimate is 70 above the pre-Tet estimate it is a far piece short of the 8,803

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claimed by the VC during 1967. The reason for this was once explained to be a result of the low number of weapons available (719) and the large number of women (912) and teenagers (627). This might be accepted as valid if it were consistent with past MACV interpretative procedures. Following the capture of a document dated late 1966 which claimed the strength of the guerrilla in Ninh Thuan to be around 1,700 (i.e., 1,698 - 1,745) MACV has accepted and held this figure as a valid estimate for the guerrilla strength of this Province. The following table demonstrates this fact.

MACV September 1967 estimate	1,700
MACV October 1967 estimate	1,700
MACV December 1967 estimate	1,700
MACV January 1968 estimate	1,700
MACV April 1968 estimate	1,688

It is also interesting to note that the document claimed that the number of weapons available to the guerrillas in Ninh Thuan was only 130 and that there were 436 women in the guerrilla force, which is a higher percentage than in Pleiku.

5. The III Corps estimate was increased from 4,618 to 6,634, a move in the right direction but totally unacceptable. Haq Nghia is estimated to have 730 guerrillas -- in February of 1968 two of the four districts of the provinces had 1,084 alone. The strength of the other two districts was 1,058 in 1967 and there is little evidence which would indicate a substantial decrease in this figure. The estimate for Haq Nghia is weak by about 1,000 men. The present MACV estimate for Gia Dinh is 294. This is a estimated decrease of 906 since 1 January 1968. According to documentary evidence there were 259 guerrillas in one of Gia Dinh's eight districts in February of 1968 alone. We could go on but let it suffice to say that the estimate for III Corps is totally unacceptable.

6. There is no change in IV Corps. The previous estimate of 13,024 was believed to have been about 10,000 shy and from all indications the trend during 1968 has not been in the direction of lowering this estimate but now 23,000 is probably low.

7. The following table shows MACV's previous and 29 April 1968 guerrilla OB estimates.

	<u>Previous</u>	<u>Currently</u>
I CTZ	12,562	25,045
II CTZ	15,979	15,806
III CTZ	4,618	6,634
IV CTZ	13,024	13,024
SMN	46,185	60,509

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TRANSMITTAL SLIP		DATE
TO: <i>Ch. D I</i>		<i>15 May 1968</i>
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	
REMARKS:		
FROM:		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	EXTENSION

FORM NO. 241
1 FEB 55

REPLACES FORM 36-8
WHICH MAY BE USED.

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